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SIPDIS

STATE FOR INL/LP

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PGOV SNAR KCRM CA

SUBJECT: C\$100 million of Heroin found in Ontario

¶1. (U) On July 28, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police's (RCMP) Ontario Division announced that a joint police forces group had executed one of the largest heroin busts in Canadian history a week earlier. The task force seized 117 kilograms of heroin with a street value of C\$100 million and more than C\$645,000 in cash from a Toronto home and storage unit. To put the size of this bust in perspective, this one seizure surpasses the average annual amount of heroin seized nationally by about 40 kilograms.

¶2. (U) Officers found the heroin wrapped in paper stamped "Islamic Republic of Afghanistan" and packed in the bottom of jewelry machinery in a Toronto residence. The RCMP believes the heroin originated in Afghanistan and was shipped from Pakistan. They also suspect that the drugs were routed by sea to docks in Montreal and Halifax, where border security has been a serious concern, according to police. Investigators speculate that the traffickers had been operating in Canada for some time, gaining the contacts and level of coordination needed for such a large drug operation. (Note: The Toronto area is home to the largest Pakistani and Afghani communities in Canada, numbering 52,800 and 31,295, respectively.)

¶3. (U) As a result of the investigation, police arrested two Toronto-area men and one woman, all of Pakistani origin, on July 22. Husband and wife, Ali Murtaza (35) and Nazma Murtaza (34), and Al Saadat (50) appeared before a Brampton Court (just west of Toronto) on July 23, facing charges under the Canadian Criminal Code and Controlled Drug and Substances Act. A contact at the RCMP told us that this is the first significant heroin case involving Pakistani suspects.

BYSFIELD